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*Lugete, O Veneres, Cupidinesque,
Et quantum est hominum venustiorum !
Passer mortuus est meæ puellæ,
Passer deliciæ meæ puellæ ;
Quem plus illa oculis suis amabat.* CATULL.



GOING the other day to visit Mrs. *Penelope Doat*, after I had waited some time in the parlour, the maid returned with her mistress's compliments, and informed me, that as she was extremely busy, she begged to be excused coming down to me, but that she would be very glad to see me in the *Nursery*. As I knew she was a maiden lady, I was a good deal startled at the message ; but however I followed the servant up stairs to her mistress ; whom I

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found

found combing a little white dog that lay in her lap, with a grey parrot perched on one arm of the settee where she sat, a monkey on the back, and a tabby cat with half a dozen kittens in the other corner. The whole room, which was a very large one, was indeed a Nursery for all kinds of animals, except those of the human species: It was hung every where with cages, containing parrots, mackaws, canary birds, nightingales, linnets, goldfinches, &c. on the chairs were several cats reposing on soft cushions; and there were little kennels, in the *Chinefe* taste, in almost every corner of the room, filled with Pugs, Fidos, and King *Charles's* breed. As soon as the chattering of the birds, the barking of the dogs, and the mewing of the cats, which my entrance occasioned, began to cease, "You find me here, Sir, (said the lady) tending my little family, the only joy of my life: "Here's a dear pretty creature (holding up the dog she "was combing) a beauty! fir, a fine long-eared snub-nosed "beauty! Lady *Faddle* advertised three quarters of a year, "and could not get the fellow to it. Ah, bless it, and love "it, sweet soul!"—And then she stroaked it, and kissed it for near two minutes, uttering the whole time all those inarticulate sounds, which cannot be committed to paper, and which are only addressed to Dogs, Cats, and Children, and may be stiled the language of the Nursery. Upon observing me smile, at the embraces she bestowed on her little motley darling, "I am afraid (said she) you don't love these "pretty creatures. How can you be so cruel? Poor *dumb* "things! I would not have them hurt for all the world: "nor do I see why a lady should not indulge herself in "having such sweet little company about her, as well as "you men run out estates in keeping a pack of filthy "hounds."

“ hounds.” Then she laid *Pompey* on his cushion by the fire-side, and railed at the barbarity of the human species to the rest of the creation, and entered into a long dissertation on tenderness and humanity.

A HUMANE disposition is, indeed so amiable either in man or woman, that it ought always to be cherished and kept alive in our bosoms; but at the same time we should be cautious not to render the first virtue of our nature ridiculous. The most compassionate temper may be sufficiently gratified by relieving the wretches of our own species: but who would ever boast of their generosity to a lap-dog, and their conferring eternal obligations on a monkey? or would any person deserve to be celebrated for their charity, who should deny support to a relation or a friend, because he maintains a litter of kittens? For my part, before I would treat a *Dutch* puppy with such absurd fondness, I must be brought to worship dogs, as the *Ægyptians* did of old; and e'er I would so extravagantly doat upon a monkey, I would (as *Iago* says on a different occasion) “ change my humanity with a baboon.”

YET there have been many instances, besides my female friend, of this fondness for the brute creation being carried to very ridiculous lengths. The grave doctors of the faculty have been called in to feel the pulse of a lap-dog, and inspect the urine of a squirrel: nay, I am myself acquainted with a lady, who carried this matter so far, as to discharge her chaplain, because he refused to bury her monkey. But the most solemn piece of mummery on these occasions is the making provisions for these animals by will; which absurd legacies as little deserve the title of humanity, as those people
merit

merit being called charitable, who in a death-bed fright starve their relations, by leaving their estates to found an hospital. It were indeed to be wished, that money left in trust for such uses were subject to some statute of *Mortmain*; or at least that the gentlemen of the long robe, would contrive some scheme to cut off the entail from Monkeys, Mackaws, *Italian* Greyhounds, and Tabby Cats.

THAT a stage coachman should love his cattle better than his wife and children, or a country squire be fond of his hounds and hunters, is not so surprising, because the reason of their regard for them is easily accounted for; and a sea-captain has, upon the same principles, been known to contract an affection for his ship: but no coachman would, like *Caligula*, tie his horses to a golden rack, but thinks he shews sufficient kindness by filling them with good wholesome provender; and the country sportsman takes care to provide his hounds with a good kennel and horse-flesh, but would never think of placing them on cushions before the fire, and feeding them with fricasees, or breed them with as much care as the heir to his estate. This irregular passion (if I may so call it) is most frequently to be met with among the ladies. How often has the flighted gallant envied the caresses given to a lap-dog, or kisses bestowed on a squirrel! and “I would I were thy bird!” has been the fond exclamation of many a *Romeo*. But it is remarkable, that this affection for birds and beasts generally wears off after marriage, and that the ladies discard their four-footed darlings and feathered favourites, when they can bestow their endearments on an husband. Wherefore, these dry nurses to Puggs and Grimalkins are mostly to be met with among those females, who have been disappointed in

in the affairs of love, and have against their will retained the flower of virginity till it has withered in their possession. It often happens, that there is some kind of analogy between the gallant they once loved, and the animal on which they afterwards fix their affections: and I myself remember an instance of a lady's passion for a lawyer being converted into dotage on a parrot; and have an old maiden aunt, who once languished for a beau, whose heart is now devoted to a monkey.

BUT I should not so much quarrel with these humane ladies, who chuse to settle their affections on the brute species, if they were not troublesome to others, who are not so sensible of the charms of a snub nose, or can discover any beauty in the grey eyes of a cat. A doating mother would never forgive you, if you did not call her brat a fine child, and dangle it about, and prattle with it, with as much seeming rapture as herself: and in like manner, a lady would take it as an affront to her own person, if you did not pay your adresses equally to her pug or her parroquet. I know a young fellow, that was cut off with a shilling by an old maiden aunt, because he gave poor *Veny* a kick only for lifting up his leg against the gentleman's stocking: and I have heard of another, who might have carried off a very rich widow, but that he could not prevail upon himself to extend his careffes to her dormouse. Indeed, I cannot help thinking, that the embraces and endearments bestowed on these rivals of the human species should be as private as the most secret intrigues; and I would have lap-dogs, like fretful and squalling children, confined to bark and growl only in the Nursery. We may often see a footman following his lady to church with a common prayer-book under one arm

a dog under the other : I have also known a grave divine forced to stop short in the middle of a prayer, while the whole congregation has been raised from their knees to attend to the howling of a lap-dog : and I once saw a tragedy monarch disturbed in his last moments, as he lay expiring on the carpet, by a little black dog of king *Charles's* breed, who jumped out of the stage-box, and seizing upon the hero's perriwig, brought it off in his mouth, and lodged it in his lady's lap.

IT will not appear strange, after what has been said, that these ladies (or lady-like gentlemen) should be as solicitous to preserve the breed of their favourite animals, as a sportsman of his hounds and horses. I have known a gentleman in St. *James's* street send his little *Cupid* in a sedan chair as far as *Grosvenor* square to wait upon a lady's *Veny* for this very purpose : and I shall never forget a Card, which was sent to another lady on a like occasion, expressed in the following terms.— “ Mr. ———'s compliments to Lady *Betty* “ ———, is glad to hear Miss *Chloe* is safely delivered, and “ begs it as a particular favour, that her ladyship would be “ pleased to SET HIM DOWN FOR A PUPPY.”

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